itself, but merely *SL* contribution to the general excited anticipation, the Prince of Denmark came on to the stage. I understood later on at the Lyceum what *days* of patient work had gone to the making of that procession.

At its tail, when the excitement was at fever heat, came the solitary figure of Hamlet, looking extraordinarily tall and thin. The lights were turned down—another stage trick—to help the effect that the figure was spirit rather than man.

He was weary—his cloak trailed on the ground. He did *not* wear the miniature of his father obtrusively round his neck! His attitude was one which I have seen in a common little illustration to the £C Reciter," compiled by Dr. Pinches (Henry Irving's old schoolmaster). Yet how right to have taken it, to have been indifferent to its humble origin! Nothing could have been better when translated into life by Irving's genius.

The hair looked blue-black, like the plumage of a crow, the eyes burning—two fires veiled as yet by melancholy. But the appearance of the man was not single, straight or obvious, as it is when I describe it—any more than his passions throughout the play were. I only remember one moment when his intensity concentrated itself in a straight-forward, unmistakable emotion, without side-current or back-water. It was when he said:

> "The play's the thing
> With which to catch the conscience of the King."

and, as the curtain came down, was seen to be writing madly on his tablets against one of the pillars.

" Oh, God, that I were a writer!" I paraphrase Beatrice with all my heart- Surely a *writer* could not string words together about Henry Irving's Hamlet and say *nothing, nothing.*